

Videoconferencing: The Gold Standard for Teletherapy

Why do we use Videoconferencing?

- Research has shown that teletherapy is as effective as in-person therapy when videoconferencing and evidence-based treatment is used (Barak, Hen, Boniel-Nissim, & Shapira, 2008).
- There is no evidence showing that telephone therapy is as effective or safe for youth (especially in trauma treatment).
- Video is the gold standard to connect with families.
- Many youth have access to videoconferencing and most are familiar with the platforms.
- Families and therapists can see each other's facial expressions.
- Therapists can see nonverbal expressions of client engagement or distress.
- Video offers more therapy activity options than the telephone (e.g., the ability to share screens, show videos, write messages, draw together, etc.).
- In videoconferencing, necessary therapy documents (e.g., consent forms, graphs showing treatment progress, outcome measures) can be shared, making them much easier to complete.
- Therapists need to see a client to notice changes in appearance (e.g., changes in weight, not taking care of themselves).
- Telephone should only be used as a backup option if there are issues with videoconferencing, for brief check-ins, or emergencies.
- For families who want to continue with teletherapy after the pandemic, videoconferencing should be the only remote option, except in emergency situations.



How to overcome discomfort when videoconferencing:

- Use videoconferencing starting at the first session to set expectations and increase the comfort level for clients and families.
- Schedule a practice session to learn how to use videoconferencing and to problem-solve any issues with clients and families.
- Identify a private space where adolescents can have their session.
- Use headphones during the session.

For additional information on telehealth best practices, as well as engaging children, youth, and families in telehealth, please view the 12.01.20 Telehealth Tools memo in the embedded link:

https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/CYF/memo_teletools.pdf